

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4390

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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TAGS: ENGR, IN

SUBJ: POSSIBLE VISIT OF MOBIL OIL GEOLOGISTS TO KASHMIR

REF : NEW DELHI 4879

LONDON FOR LAMBRAKIS FOR AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN

DEPARTMENT FOR BORN NEA/ INS

SUMMARY: A GROUP OF MOBIL OIL GEOLOGISTS, AND ONE GEOLOGIST FROM THE NATIONAL IRANIAN OIL COMPANY, HAVE REQUESTED EMBASSY ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING GOI CLEARANCE FOR A JUNE TRIP TO SRINAGAR AND PAHLGAM IN KASHMIR. THE NATURE OF THE INQUIRY AND ITS TIMING CREATE QUESTIONS AS TO THE INTENDED PURPOSES OF THE VISIT (IE.. VACATION OR FIELD WORK?)
ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENTAL INQUIRY TO MOBIL. END SUMMARY.

1. MINERALS ATTACHE SWEETWOOD JUST RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING COMMERCIAL CABLE FROM MOBIL OIL REPRESENTATIVES, PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY:

" MOBIL OIL GEOLOGISTS PLAN TRIP TO SRINAGAR, JAMMU AREA, JUNE 24- JUNE 30. TRIP INCLUDES EXCURSION TO GLACIER AREA NEAR PAHLGAM.
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PARTY INCLUDES R. A. HOWE, D. O. HEMER, A. KLAVER, C. A. BURK, AND ONE GEOLOGIST FROM NATIONAL IRANIAN OIL COMPANY. HAVE REQUESTED ASSISTANCE FROM ROY CHOWDHRY OF GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA IN CALCUTTA WHO ADVISED US TO CONTACT YOU IN REGARD TO NECESSARY CLEARANCE AND ADVISING US FURTHER. WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING CLEARANCE FROM INDIAN GOVERNMENT. OUR DATE OF ARRIVAL IN SRINAGAR IS JUNE 24. R. A. HOWE BY D. O. HEMER."

2. VISITS TO SRINAGAR AND PAHLGAM DO NOT REQUIRE PERMITS. HOWEVER, MOBIL'S DESIRE FOR " ASSISTANCE" FROM THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY (ROY CHOWDHRY) SUGGESTS THEIR VISIT MAY BE PLANNED AS A WORKING FIELD TRIP RATHER THAN TOURISM.

3. THE GOI'S PETROLEUM MINISTRY HAS CALLED FOR OFFSHORE OIL CONTRACT DRILLING BIDS ON OR BEFORE JUNE 15 (REFTEL). MOBIL WAS NOT INCLUDED IN INITIAL PETROLEUM MINISTRY MAILING LIST OF AMERICAN COMPANIES, BUT WE BELIEVE NIOC MAY HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE " OTHER-COUNTRY" FIRMS INVITED TO BID. MOBIL AND NIOC HAVE WORKED TOGETHER ELSEWHERE, AND MAY BE LOOKING TOWARD A SIMILAR COLLABORATION IN OFFSHORE DRILLING IN INDIA. ALSO, THE GOI'S OIL AND NATURAL GAS COMMISSION (WITH WHOM ALL FOREIGN OIL CONTRACTORS WILL WORK ON OFFSHORE DRILLING IN INDIA) IS CURRENTLY EMBARRASSED OVER THEIR RECENTLY ABANDONED UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORT TO COMPLETE A 20,000- FT. ONSHORE WILDCAT WELL IN THE GENERAL AREA THE MOBIL GEOLOGISTS WISH TO VISIT. THE WELL WAS ATTEMPTED ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SOVIET TECHNICIANS, AND PROVED TO BE A COSTLY MISTAKE BECAUSE OF INADEQUATE GEOLOGICAL DATA AVAILABLE BEFORE DRILLING WAS STARTED.

4. PLEASE CONTACT MOBIL REPRESENTATIVES AND INQUIRE IF VISIT TO KASHMIR IS VACATION ONLY (AFTER SUBMITTING OFFSHORE BIL), OR IF WORKING FIELD TRIP IS PLANNED TO STUDY ONSHORE HIMALAYAN GEOLOGY. IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO KNOW IF MOBIL AND NIOC GEOLOGISTS HAVE BEEN ASKED BY SOME GOI AGENCY (E. G. MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM OR MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES) TO CONDUCT EITHER OIL- ORIENTED, OR OTHER, WORK IN THESE AREAS. WE DOUBT THAT THE GOI WOULD APPROVE WORKING FIELD TRIP IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, MOBIL AND NIOC ARE INITIATING REQUEST.
SCHNEIDER

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